

REMARKS

Previous Claims 1-34 have been canceled and replaced with new Claims 35-55. Because the number of independent claims and the total number of claims now presented does not exceed the numbers previously paid for, Applicants believe that no fees are owed for additional claims. If fees are owed, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 19-3550.

New Claims 35-55 have not been examined. The following features help distinguish the new claims over prior art previously cited by the Examiner.

a) Perez et al. (U.S. Patent 6,331,343)

Perez et al. discloses fibers and fibrillated articles formed by imparting fluid energy to at least one surface of a highly oriented, voided, melt processed polymeric film. In essence, the films employ a combination of thin gauge, voided structure and stretching to facilitate easy longitudinal splitting of the film into microfibers having an average diameter of less than 20 microns (Col. 2 lines 1-24). Applicants' invention, by contrast, is directed to a uniaxially oriented strapping having a width of 0.5-3 cm (5000-30,000 microns) and a thickness of 0.03-0.20 cm (300-2000 microns). The composition and dimensions of the strapping are selected so that the strapping resists longitudinal splitting while under tension, as recited in independent Claims 35-38. This is exactly the opposite of Perez et al., which employs compositions and dimensions designed to facilitate longitudinal splitting of a film into numerous microfibers.

Perez et al. relies on the widely known concept that combining immiscible polymers and forming films from the combination will result in polymer separation, void formation, splitting and the like when the film is subjected to stresses. Applicants' invention, by contrast, achieves a surprising and unexpected result by mixing polyester with generally incompatible polyolefins at the claimed concentrations. Contrary to conventional wisdom,

when small amounts of polyolefins are added to the polyester strapping and the strapping has the claimed dimensions and orientation, the strapping has improved resistance to splitting compared to similar strapping formed from polyester without the polyolefin additive. This is explained on page 1, lines 1-5, page 3, lines 10-13 and page 4, lines 14-21 of the Applicants' specification.

b) Nishimura et al. (U.S. Patent 5,607,183)

Nishimura et al. was previously cited as disclosing various polyester materials used in reinforcing belts. However, Nishimura et al. does not disclose Applicants' invention, which is directed to the use of small amounts of polyolefin in oriented polyester strapping having the claimed dimensions, to cause improved resistance to longitudinal splitting while under tension.

c) Maugans et al. (U.S. Patent 6,270,891)

Maugans et al. was previously cited as disclosing branched low density polyethylene. Maugans et al. does not disclose Applicants' invention, which is directed to the use of small amounts of polyolefin in oriented polyester strapping having the claimed dimensions, to cause improved resistance to longitudinal splitting while under tension.

d) Steinkamp et al. (U.S. Patent 3,862,265)

Steinkamp et al. was previously cited as disclosing polyolefin grafted with maleic anhydride or acrylic acid. Steinkamp et al. does not disclose Applicants' invention, which is directed to the use of small amounts of polyolefin in oriented polyester strapping having the claimed dimensions, to cause improved resistance to longitudinal splitting while under tension.

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e). Conclusion

Applicants believe that the claimed invention is distinguishable over the prior art for at least the foregoing reasons. If the Examiner detects any unresolved issues, then Applicants' undersigned attorney respectfully requests a telephone call and a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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